



Touring District 2 with Forest Whitaker...

Posted by [Pierluigi Oliverio](#) on Monday, August 04, 2008

City Hall Diary

...well, actually, I toured District 2 with Councilmember Forrest Williams. However, sometimes people mistakenly call him by the actor's name instead. Who could blame them? Councilmember Williams has star power; especially driving his Batmobile Mercedes. Councilmember Williams is very energetic and shared many stories about District 2 with me. He does his morning jog up the local hill and eats oatmeal every morning. I hope to have his energy as my hair grays.

We covered every inch of the district, driving the entire boundary, which is the southern border of San Jose. District 2 is a mix of newer and older homes, and highways 87 and 85 and have had a big impact on the area.

Some of the newer developments in the southern part of the district are luxury homes that can be partly seen from Highway 101. Nice homes to look at—and a nice park to boot. However, this type of development costs us more as we stretch out our city services to this new neighborhood. District 2 is also home to Coyote Valley, where the same challenges come up of stretching already thin city services.

Neighborhoods have different nuisances. For example my pet peeve is my neighbor down the street and his feral cats that wake me up every other night. However, in parts of District 2 it is hungry pigs. These pigs, otherwise known as "wild boars," come down from the hills to munch on landscaping and they love to dig big holes to eat roots. I hope the Realtor who sells these houses is forthcoming about the hungry pigs.

Edenvale has had a reduction of crime in the last few years and some of it can be attributed to RDA dollars spent on the SNI neighborhood in District 2. The vision is for a community center to be built on a public school property where it can be jointly used for both the school and the neighborhood. Funding would come from RDA, however we as a

city will have to find the money to staff and maintain the facility. In my district we just did the groundbreaking for the Bascom Library and Community Center where once open in 2010 we will need to find approximately \$1 million to staff it annually.

Edenvale itself has a major focus of locating jobs to South San Jose. There has been success with the recent arrival of several companies, such as NDS Surgical from Morgan Hill, VNUS Medical from North San Jose and IDT Semiconductor from Santa Clara. However, there have also been some losses, including ONI, Clearlogic and Agile Software, which are no longer there because of acquisition or failure. Vacant commercial buildings can be occupied again by a new company however if the land itself is converted to another use then there is a future dilemma.

Locating churches in industrial areas is one example of industrial land use policy. A growing congregation was looking for a larger church space and wanted to use an industrial building as a church. The council approved this against planning department recommendations a few years ago to allow the church in the Edenvale industrial area in exchange for a guarantee that the prior church building would revert back to industrial use (which it did not).

Conflicts occur when an industrial parcel has a prospective tenant who generates a lot of noise, or uses chemicals such as those used to manufacture semiconductors. Often, locating uses like these next to places where people gather causes conflicts.

Perhaps growing churches can schedule multiple services on Sunday to maximize their existing building's occupancy over an entire day. Services with high attendance can be powerful, however many cars at one time can overwhelm neighborhoods, and land is scarce. This is another topic the General Plan Task force that I sit on will discuss.

Finally, we visited Valley Christian High School, which sits atop a hill. This privately funded high school is impressive, with incredible facilities like a performing arts theater rivaling the Rep, a huge pool (two simultaneous water polo games), baseball field with sunken dugouts and a football field with an amazing view of San Jose. The view from District 2 looks good.

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